

Heart of the Gospel

Part 4 – Father Abraham

Romans 4

Abraham was justified – made right with a righteous God – by faith alone

By faith alone, not by works (v.1-8)

- Justification by works is earning (v.4)
 - Do you really think you can put God in some debt to you?
- Justification by faith is grace (v.5)
 - Sam – push-ups in Donna’s driveway – what if he had said don’t worry about it? What if he had promised me he’d take care of it and then did them for me?
 - “Count / counted / counts” – 11x in this chapter
 - Jesus our propitiation pays our debt and purchases favor – we are counted right

By faith alone, not by circumcision (v.9-12)

- Argument: Abraham was counted righteous (Gen. 15) before being circumcised (Gen. 17)
- Application: this is for everyone, not just Jews (v.11-12)
 - Lady on Airplane – I was baptized a Catholic as a baby
- The sign of the covenant is not the soul of the covenant

By faith alone, not by The Law (v.13-17)

- Those who count on The Law...
 - Miss the fact that the Promise to Abraham came first (v.13)
 - Miss the fact that The Law reveals our sin (v.14-15)
 - Miss the fact that the Promise to Abraham was for everyone (v.16-17)

By faith alone, not by sight (v.18-22)

- God’s promises are truer than our circumstances (v.18-19)
 - They can distract us or make us distrust God, but they are not truer than Him
- God can grow imperfect faith (v.20-22)
 - Abraham struggled at times to believe, but “he grew strong in his faith...”

God gave Abraham to us as an example (v.23-24)

We are justified by faith in Jesus (v.25)

- He was delivered up for our trespasses – paying for our sins
- He was raised for our justification – making us forever right with God

You want security?

- The doctrine of justification sets you free to be secure without being arrogant

You want the satisfaction?

- The doctrine of justification sets you free to strive for holiness without struggling with the anxiety of measuring up (this IS the good life)

Jesus has done this for us and is bearing its fruit in us

Questions for Discussion:

1. What was the first job you ever had? How much did you make per hour? How did it feel when you got your first raise? Have you ever had anyone stiff you on a paycheck?
2. In the sermon, the text taught that Abraham was justified by faith and not by works. What are specific ways that you have seen people try to earn the right to relate to God? What were the outcomes of those efforts? What were the repercussions to key relationships (spouse, kids, etc.)?
3. As a church, we believe that baptism is an important sign of the covenant that God has made with us in Christ. In the sermon, the text taught us that the sign of the covenant was not the reason Abraham was justified before God. What other religious rites and rituals do people use to assure themselves (or others) that they are “okay with God?” What would Abraham say (v.9-12)?
4. Throughout the chapter, Paul continually argues that this truth isn’t just for Jews but for all humanity (v.9, 11-12, 16, 23-24). Why do you think this is a persistent refrain in his argument? How then does this push us outward in ministry? Consider this quote as you respond: “There is nothing colder than a Christian who does not seek to save others” ~ John Chrysostom (A.D. 349-407)
5. How would you gauge your own sense of security with God and satisfaction in God? What would someone close to you say (spouse, etc.)? How does this doctrine of justification by faith alone give rise to both security and satisfaction?